



The Nation Exposed : A Critique of Nations and Nationalism

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The Scottish independence referendum the dispute over Crimea Catalonia Kosovo Northern Ireland: wherever we look there are disputes, debates and conflicts in which nations and nationalism play a central role. We accept the nation - nations are natural, they are obvious, every person belongs to one and every place is part of one. This book exposes the nation as a construction. Drawing on the wealth of literature and theory that rarely enters the wider public consciousness where the nation is uncritically taken for granted, the modern nation is deconstructed, revealing that it is of recent origin and that there is a lack of any foundation in reality for a definition of any individual nation. Two main examples are used to illustrate the contradictions and conflicts that can arise: the British nation which has an accompanying state (the United Kingdom) - a nation-state and the Scottish nation for which the Scottish nationalist movement seeks one (as through the independence referendum in September 2014) based on the nationalist doctrine of self-determination. Nationalism is a powerful ideology that has come to dominate the world and has even been adopted by those who should (and did) oppose it, such as Marxists and others on the political left whose philosophical position is consequently undermined. It is also a dangerous ideology it is divisive along constructed lines, leading to a process of inclusion and exclusion of people and territory disputes are inevitable, and when taken to extremes, for example in fascism, this can cause violence and oppression. The author therefore makes an anti-nationalist argument an argument for a more critical consideration of nations and nationalism, one which examines the logic and the implications of these rather than accepting them as natural, inevitable and benign.

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